

## LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC (LAOS)

## STRATEGIC FOCUS

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has collaborated with multilateral, governmental, non-governmental, and civil society organizations to adapt, evaluate and implement new tools, programs, and policies to combat HIV, sexually transmitted infections, and tuberculosis (TB) in Laos since 2009. CDC initiatives promote and demonstrate sustainable epidemic control solutions that have been adopted, integrated, and scaled-up into existing health systems by the government and stakeholders. CDC supports activities for persons living with HIV (PLHIV) by working with the Lao People's Democratic Republic Ministry of Health (MOH), World Health Organization (WHO), and partners in five high burden provinces to:

- Increase detection of undiagnosed HIV patients through HIV index testing and other case finding strategies.
- Improve antiretroviral therapy (ART) literacy, linkage from voluntary counseling and testing sites to ART facilities, time to ART initiation, adherence, retention to care, and viral suppression among PLHIV.
- Expand ART access by decentralizing HIV treatment services to point-of-care ART sites.
- Strengthen TB/HIV co-infection and opportunistic infections (OI) management.
- Improve national laboratory quality, coverage, and data monitoring of existing HIV rapid test, HIV-1 viral load test, and HIV recent infection test external quality assurance programs.
- Reduce patients' interruption in treatment through track and trace activities.
- Strengthen decentralization of point-of-care Xpert® HIV-1 viral load (VL) through the existing Xpert® network.
- Maintain recent infection surveillance to target interventions and improve overall response.
- Strengthen data information systems and HIV program monitoring.
- Support a phased transition to a sustainable government-led response.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CDC initiatives in Laos have improved access to and retention in HIV care; promoted continuous quality improvement activities for HIV testing, treatment, and laboratory services; strengthened and streamlined surveillance to monitor the HIV epidemic and risk behaviors among key populations; and supported the utilization of strategic information for program monitoring and evaluation.

**Expansion of HIV prevention, care, and treatment services:**

- Successfully improved the quality of HIV counseling, testing, care, and treatment services and contributed to the development and revision of standard operational procedures: HIV and OI treatment and management guidelines, HIV retention guidelines, enhanced adherence counseling manuals and flipchart, guidelines for the expansion of HIV treatment and care services to point-of-care ART sites.
- Developed index testing implementation guidelines, trained health providers, and expanded index testing service and monitoring systems to 11 ART sites and community-based sites.
- Provided technical assistance to design, implement, standardize, and improve the quality of HIV surveillance systems.
- Supported national HIV quality improvement workshops, trainings, and HIV quality improvement activities; implementation at ART site level to promote same-day and rapid ART initiation; reduction of interruption in treatment; promotion of Tenofovir-Lamivudine-Dolutegravir (TLD) transition; and increased uptake of VL testing coverage, TB preventive treatment, and multi-month dispensing.
- Collaborated with WHO to provide technical support for establishing and expanding point-of-care ART sites.
- Supported HIV VL decentralization and established an external quality assurance program to improve access and quality of VL testing services.

**Health system strengthening and policy development:**

- Successfully supported the transition of the HIV monitoring system from one software platform to another, improved data quality, and strengthened MOH capacity for data analysis and utilization.
- Implemented the index testing monitoring system and integrated index testing and recency testing variables into the national HIV monitoring system.
- Established the national recent infection surveillance system with real time reporting.

## Key Country Leadership

President:  
Thongloun Sisoulith

Prime Minister:  
Phankham Viphavanh

Minister of Health:  
Bounfeng Phoummalaysith

U.S. Ambassador:  
Peter Haymond

CDC Country Director:  
James Heffelfinger

DGHT Program Director:  
Sanny Northbrook

**Country Quick Facts**  
([worldbank.org/en/where-we-work](http://worldbank.org/en/where-we-work))

Per Capita GNI:  
\$2,520 (2021)

Population (millions):  
7.38 (2021)

Under 5 Mortality:  
44/1,000 live births (2020)

Life Expectancy:  
68.2 years (2020)

**Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic**  
([aidsinfo.unaids.org](http://aidsinfo.unaids.org))

Estimated HIV Prevalence  
(Ages 15-49): 0.3% (2021)

Estimated AIDS Deaths  
(Age ≥15): <500 (2021)

Estimated Orphans Due to  
AIDS: 6,400 (2021)

Reported Number Receiving  
Antiretroviral Therapy (ART)  
(Age ≥15): 7,882 (2020)

**Global Tuberculosis  
(TB) Epidemic**  
([who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en](http://who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en))

Estimated TB Incidence:  
149/100,000 population (2020)

TB Patients with Known HIV  
Status who are HIV-Positive:  
5.6% (2020)

TB Treatment Success Rate:  
90% (2019)

**DGHT Country Staff: 1**  
Locally Employed Staff: 1  
Direct Hires: 0  
Fellows & Contractors: 0

Our success is built on the backbone of science and strong partnerships.

September 2022 | The CDC Division of Global HIV & TB activities are implemented as part of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR); non-HIV related TB activities are supported by non-PEPFAR funding

